'THE MUSICAL PILGRIM'

General Editor *Dr. Arthur Somervell*

SCHUBERT: II

QUARTET IN D MINOR AND OCTET

BY

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Quartet in D minor

(posthumous)

THE Quartet in D minor, known as 'Death and the Maiden' because of Schubert's use of the melody of his song of that name, is the most widely known of all his chamber-music. The reasons for this widespread admiration are (1) its name, and (2) the serenely beautiful melody which bears that romantic name. The quartet was written in the year 1826, but was not published until after the composer's death. Actually the original melody of the song 'Death and the Maiden' was written in the year 1816.

It was no unusual practice for Schubert to use previously composed melodies in his compositions. For instance, the song 'The Wanderer' supplies the theme for the C major Fantasy (Op. 15), known consequently as 'The Wanderer Fantasy'. In the piano Quintet in A major he uses the melody of the song 'The Trout' in a similar capacity.

Though making the melody 'Death and the Maiden' the central feature of the quartet, Schubert does not attempt to make it, as it were, the second act of a four-act drama. The quartet is not planned as an organic whole as is Chopin's tragic Sonata in B flat minor, but though each movement is independent of the others there are signs that Schubert deliberately maintained a sombre mood. In the first place, the four movements are in the minor scale, which is unusual and, by the laws of form, incorrect. In the second place, the first movement begins dramatically with four bars full of strength and determination, followed by ten bars of simple yet eloquent harmony; the two highly

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contrasted moods suggesting the relentless approach of Death, and the tender appeal of the stricken child. Thirdly, consciously or unconsciously, Schubert has quoted, as part of the second subject of the Finale, a phrase from *The Erl-King* originally set to the words 'Meine Töchter sollen dich warten schön'. This may be only a coincidence, but it is just probable that the words of Death to the boy may have recurred to Schubert's mind as he pondered over the words of Death to the maiden.

First Movement: *Allegro: D minor: Sonata form.*

The movement opens with the principal subject, delivered *fortissimo* by the second violin and viola (in octaves) supported on either side by the first violin and cello on the tonic (D).

Ex. 1.

The triplet (No. 1, *a*) is the most significant feature of the subject, and lends character to a great deal of the subsequent movement. This first appearance of this subject is not the principal presentation, which actually occurs in the forty-first bar; the first presentation of the subject being, as so often in Schubert's music, only by way of prelude. These four bars, typifying, as I have suggested, the inexorable advance of death, are followed by ten bars of unstrained but unusual harmony, wavering rather uncertainly between the keys of D minor, F major, and C major, which by the same interpretation becomes the nervous appeal of the frightened child. This section, fourteen bars long,

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ends with a pause on the dominant. A new passage, still only by way of prelude, begins as follows :

Ex. 2.

The triplets from the first subject are now given to the viola and cello, while the violins are given strong Bach-like counter-subjects. The whole passage, by reason of the triplets in the bass and the clashing suspensions in the upper parts, is full of vitality and of suppressed excitement. There now occurs a progression, very simple yet giving distinction to the whole passage :

Ex. 3.

The chord we should have expected instead of the chord No. 3, *a*, would have been a chord of G minor ; but substitute a chord of G minor for this chord chosen by Schubert, and notice how flat and stale the music becomes. This progression, used as part of a sequence, gives great driving-power to the music because each discord resolves upon a chord which has no sense of finality. This passage (No. 2), five bars long, is now repeated an octave higher, and then Schubert sets out by a long and exciting route, through strange and

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unexpected harmonies, to reach the principal statement of the first subject, of which the skeleton is:

Ex. 4.

This subject, four bars long as in No. 1, now continues in the triplet rhythm through the dominant sevenths of A major, D major, and G major until it reaches F major, and the following melodious *coda*:

Ex. 5.

which is repeated and which, by ending upon an unresolved discord, prepares the way for the second subject, which is delivered by the violins as a duet over an unusually rhythmic accompaniment in the viola and cello.

Ex. 6.

An examination of this melody will show that it is of curious formation, being extended by two beats beyond the regular four-bar pattern. The melody is now repeated an octave higher, and in its continuation Schubert shows himself a skilful colourist even with the limited means at his disposal. The viola now provides the real bass, while the cello, leaving its lowly position,

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fulfils an important rôle in the upper register, providing the effect of a soft and smooth-toned horn :

Ex. 7.

For eleven bars this exchange of rôles is continued, while the music drifts towards the key of A flat major, but actually lands in F major. The section upon which we are now entering, though nominally in the domain of the second subject, is in reality an important piece of thematic development. A new counterpoint is devised to accompany the rhythmic phrases of the second subject (No. 6, *a*), which are tossed about from instrument to instrument with an exhilarating sense of freedom. It will be observed that the phrase No. 8, *a*, is in double counterpoint, that is, it sounds equally satisfactory above and below the central theme.

Ex. 8.

After seven bars, in which the phrase No. 8, *b*, is in the lower instruments, while the first violin continues to reproduce phrase No. 8, *a*, in a varied succession of keys, the parts are exchanged ; the first and second violins are given phrase No. 8, *b*, in octaves, while the

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cello and viola take up phrase No. 8, *a*, and treat it with even greater abandon than the first violin had previously done.

This passage continues for seven bars, when a long dominant-seventh preparation leads the way into the key of A major. Here several new features are introduced. The second violin and cello have a variant of the second subject; the viola has a continuous succession of triplets, derived from the opening subject, while the first violin has a new phrase fashioned out of No. 8, *a*.

This passage works up from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*, thirteen bars later, when a new and more dramatic treatment is provided. The cello, using a phrase from No. 10, *a*, arrests the rapid progress of the music by a direct interrogation, 'Who goes there?' To which the upper strings make a cheerful but nervous reply.

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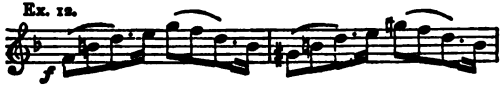
Ex. 11.

After six bars the cello repeats its challenge, to which the upper strings answer as before, but now sinking through a remarkable series of modulations into the dominant of A minor. Here a new feature, of which considerable use is made in the development section, makes its appearance:

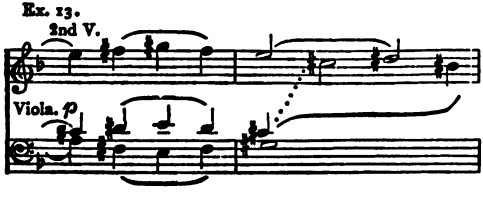
Ex. 12.



The exposition is rounded off by seven bars of A minor harmony treated in the manner of No. 11. All this opening section is marked for repetition.

The development opens in C major. The second violin issues the challenge (cf. No. 11, *a*), to which the lower strings make an answer, ending with characteristic cadence:

Ex. 13.



during which the first violin, getting rather impatient over the time wasted on sentiment and clamouring for a strenuous life, indulges in a fine flourish of semi-

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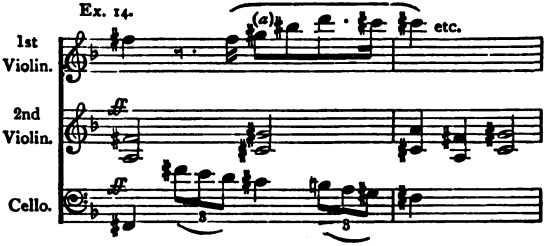
quavers. After a passing allusion to No. 12 and after another cadence similar to No. 13, we come to the real thematic development, which is unusually ingenious for Schubert. No less than three distinct themes are employed simultaneously: the first violin having a variant of the second subject (No. 7); the second violin having the fine Bach-like *canto fermo* (No. 2); while the cello opens with an energetic descending passage in triplets, founded rhythmically upon the first subject. The viola for the nonce has no star-part to play and simply helps to enrich the part-writing.

In the following example the three chief parts will be clearly seen:

Ex. 14.



The rhythm of the phrase (No. 14, *a*) now assumes great importance, and appears in every part separately or in unison. A soft interlude, founded upon No. 12, is used twice as a foil to the loud and vigorous treatment of No. 7. The development closes with a passage founded upon this same hard-worked phrase, in which the viola and cello are used in free imitation against the first and second violins, the section ending with an emphatic chord of A major.

The recapitulation begins after a long dominant preparation in which the rhythm is

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maintained by the viola while the upper strings move alternately in triplets, thereby re-establishing the mood and manner of the first subject. As far as the first subject is concerned, the recapitulation differs not at all from the exposition, except that the modulations are so managed that the melody (No. 5) now appears in D major, the key in which the second subject is due to appear. In presenting the second subject the alteration of the key has necessitated a slightly different treatment. The second violin now provides the triplet accompaniment (cf. No. 6), while the melody is given as a duet to the first violin and viola. No new feature is introduced until the close of the second subject, which, following the exposition, should have ended in D major. This key, D major, however, does not suit Schubert's purpose, so he boldly contradicts the major by a repetition of the last bar in the minor:

Ex. 15.

The remainder of the so-called second subject section follows the exposition very closely, except that Schubert cuts away the initial semiquaver from the contrapuntal figure (No. 8, *a*), substituting a rest. The passage No. 10 follows in due course, now, however, in the key of B flat major. From this point until the *coda* the music follows the same lines as in the exposition, but at the *coda* Schubert's imagination is kindled once again. The cello, holding the last note of the recapitulation (bottom D), sinks to a whisper when the music, catching the atmosphere of mystery, recommences not in D minor but in an inversion of a chord of B flat. The pace quickens until the strings burst

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without warning, *fortissimo*, upon a violent and ambiguous chord (No. 16, *a*), which is made all the more dissonant by being sustained over the tonic pedal (D).

Ex. 16.

Then the passage (No. 2) marked *piu mosso* begins, at first softly but rising slowly to a climax and, seemingly, the end. But Schubert has not said all that is to be said about this movement, or else it may be that he felt that a brilliant conclusion of the first movement was an unsuitable prelude for the opening of 'Death and the Maiden'. Whatever the reason, he has added a second *coda* of very great beauty and tenderness,

Ex. 17.

casting over our minds a musical shadow, which we soon realize is none other than the shadow of the outstretched hand of Death.

Second Movement: *Theme and Variations.*

To write about this movement, the 'Death and the Maiden' variations, is difficult. It is so well known that to mention its particular beauties is superfluous, to suggest possible imperfections an impertinence. To expect to discover the cause of the rose's beauty by plucking asunder the delicate petals may appear a

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childish act of folly, but yet it is possible that by so doing the eyes of the blind may be opened to a fuller appreciation of Nature and Nature's ways. So also, by a loving and detailed study of an unquestioned masterpiece, it is just possible that the ears of the deaf may be opened to hear more distinctly the strange mysterious messages of music. That must be my excuse, though perhaps not my justification.

The melody, though called by the name of the song, differs greatly from the form in which it first appeared. Doubtless after writing the song Schubert was haunted by it (indeed, who is there who has heard it and has not been haunted?), and found that through unconscious cerebration he had completed in his mind a new and full-grown melody of which the song is merely the germ.

If tested by the rules of theoreticians, the melody would be described as bad. In the first place its dactylic rhythm is practically unrelieved throughout its forty-eight bars, and in the second place its outline is dreadfully monotonous and undistinguished, the key-note being repeated fourteen times in eight bars, actually two-thirds of the notes used.

Ex. 18.

The bass by the same theoretical rules is even worse, sixteen of its notes being the key-note, the other five being the dominant. And yet how beautiful it is! how tender and serene! how different from that dread

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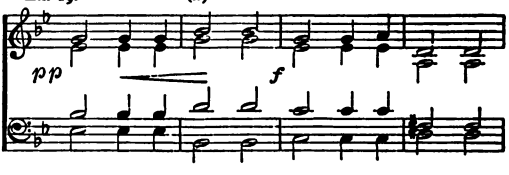
conception of the King of Terrors which Milton with his bold imagination thus describes :

> black he stood as night,
> Fierce as ten furies ; terrible as Hell.

Though Milton's picture of Death is magnificently sombre, Schubert's picture is what we all prefer. Since all of us must some time stand face to face with Death, how infinitely better we should think of him as Schubert did in this heart-easing melody, or as Henley did in his brave poem which begins 'The ways of Death are soothing and serene'.

The remainder of the tune is just as simple, and not a whit less lovely. Personally, if I had to award the title of genius to any composer for two bars of music, I would be inclined to award it to Schubert for the first two bars of this second section :

Ex. 19. (*a*)



What intensity and what restraint there is in that mournful second bar (No. 19, *a*)! No wrenching, aching harmonies ! just a faultily written chord of the sixth. Would not a thousand other composers have written a common chord of B flat major, thereby missing the poignancy of that G in the second violin part ? What suffering and what art are here combined to make grief seem at once so lovely and yet so sad ! The third section, though closing with a cadence which may strike some hearers as a trifle too beautiful, opens with four bars which make us feel half in love with

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easeful death. I know of no other bars in music which so faithfully produce the sensation of profound sleep, the upward rise to A flat (No. 20, *a*) suggesting the momentary turning of the head upon the pillow and the immediate return again to sleep.

Ex. 20. (*a*)

The last four bars are perhaps a thought too sweet, but it is the sweetness of awakening on a bright spring morning, feeling once again the joy of life and the freedom from all pain.

The variations which follow add but little to the beauty of the theme, being content to follow the harmonies as they stand in simple arabesques and varied rhythms. In the first variation the second violin sustains the chief features of the melody in triplets, while the first violin provides some independent filigree work elaborated out of the simple harmonic scheme.

Ex. 21.

The second variation has more features of interest. The rôle of chief singer is given to the cello; the accompaniment, in the rhythm ♪♪ | ♪, is given to the viola. The second violin adds an important second voice *beneath* the cello, while the first violin flickers

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harmonically above the rest in a series of staccato semiquavers.

The third variation applies to the harmony of the theme a matter-of-fact rhythm which, though undeniably stimulating, is rather out of keeping with the original character of the music. In the second part of the variation a fine expansive harmony is obtained by the use of widespread chords in the first violin and cello. In the third variation the theme is recast in the major mode, the substance and the shadow of the melody being provided by the interweaving of the three lower strings, while the first violin adds an embroidery of continuous triplets. In the last variation the music returns to the minor, the second violin and viola playing a variant of the melody similar to the variant which they played in the first variation, except that the parts are now transposed.

Ex. 22.

Over this the first violin suddenly bursts from indolence to activity. This activity, in the form of reiterated semiquavers, gradually infects the whole quartet, as the following passage will show:

Ex. 23.

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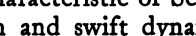
Another striking portion of this variation is that which corresponds to the bars No. 20. The viola provides an interior dominant pedal, while the second violin and cello have these strikingly individual parts:

Ex. 24.

The rest of the movement is devoted to reducing the energy down to the quiet and restful mood of the original theme. This is done by altering semiquavers first into triplet quavers and then into two quavers. Finally, the quaver movement passes by syncopation into crotchets until its initial force is completely spent, and the movement comes to rest in the key of G major.

Third Movement: *Scherzo and Trio: D minor and D major.*

This movement is characteristic of Schubert, being full of striking rhythm and swift dynamic and harmonic changes. The rhythm  dominates the Scherzo, and is not without influence upon the Trio. The movement opens with the following theme given to the violins in octaves, accompanied out of harm's way by the viola and cello:

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Ex. 25.

This theme, eight bars long, ends on the dominant. The second violin then takes up the tale, *piano*, accompanied with entirely fresh harmony by the other instruments:

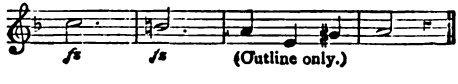
Ex. 26.

Each couple of bars of this exposition is important, new features occurring continually, of which great use is made in the remainder of the work. Two important features are a descending scale (made more brilliant by acciaccaturas) and a sturdy two-bar figure, notable for a violent cross-accent.

Ex. 27. (*a*)

All the strings now join in the downward scale passage, ending with an unexpectedly short epigrammatic cadence:

Ex. 28.



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The humour of this cadence lies in the fact that it brings the exposition to a sudden end in twenty-two bars, while the hearer, expecting the regulation pattern of twenty-four bars, is pulled up with a jerk, as happens when we reach the bottom of the stairs when we fully expected two more steps. This section is marked for repetition. The remainder of the Scherzo is devoted to a vigorous and witty development of these materials. Chief use is made of the opening theme (No. 25), though the two contrasting phrases (No. 27, *a* and *b*) contribute a few bars. The whole of this section is characterized by periods of unexpected lengths—ten bars, nine bars, and even eleven bars, giving the listener the impression that the music was written by a musical elf with an unrestrained delight in mischief. What else could explain the odd whimsicality of the last four bars?

Ex. 29.

The whimsical mood persists in the Trio; the melody being mostly in two-bar rhythm (No. 30, *a*), ending up with four bars in closely packed one-bar rhythm (No. 30, *b*).

Ex. 30*a*.

Ex. 30*b*.

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The melody (No. 30, *a*) is repeated as a duet between the viola and cello, the first violin capering over the top, while the second violin remains true to its original rhythm ♩. ♪♩ | 𝅗𝅥. |.

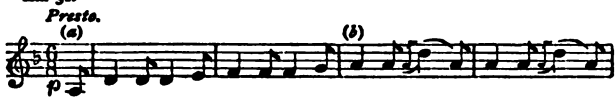
The remainder of the Trio is but a continuation of the ideas thus put forward, very graceful and charming but of no great moment. The Scherzo is then repeated. As a movement, this Scherzo and Trio is a splendid example of a type of humour known in literature as Paraprosdokian, that is 'contrary to opinion'; the author's purpose being to lead us to suppose that a certain thing will follow, and then deliberately falsifying our expectation, such as, 'His father, being generous, gave him a black eye'. Throughout this movement Schubert is continually leading us to suppose that the rhythm will pursue a certain course, that the harmony will follow the established rules, and in each case we are happily disappointed.

Fourth Movement: *Finale: Presto: D minor.*

Structurally this movement defies all the rules of form. The opening theme is marked for repetition; the succeeding passage, constructed upon the first theme, is also marked for repetition, whereas the bridge-passage and the second subject are not included in the repetition but merge imperceptibly into the development.

The opening theme, not unlike the tune from the Rondo of Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata, opens for all the strings in octaves:

Ex. 31.



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ending with :

Ex. 32.

of which great use is made in the subsequent development of the movement.

There are two curious features about this opening subject : the first eight bars end in F major, the second eight bars end in B flat major ; neither end in the expected key of D minor. These sixteen bars are marked for repetition. The next section, which we might reasonably expect would lead to the second subject, does nothing of the kind, but for forty-six bars develops the first subject. Not even then does Schubert prepare for the second subject, but instead repeats the whole of these forty-six bars. Certainly they are attractive bars and well worth repeating. The viola and cello have eight bars of imitation founded upon the theme (No. 31, *a*), while the first violin supplies an harmonic background out of the figure (No. 31, *b*). This passage ends with a brilliant flourish in A major, after which the first and second violins take up the theme, answered two bars later by the viola and cello in unison :

Ex. 33.

Soon the strings join forces and recommence a unison version of the opening theme (No. 31) until by a totally unexpected wrench (No. 34, *a*) the music swerves into B minor :

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Ex. 34.

After the repetition Schubert adds, by way of a bridge-passage, the following two-bar phrase, rapid scales ending in harmonic explosions:

Ex. 35.

After working this new motif through various keys, Schubert reaches the key of C major (the dominant of F major), establishing his position by a twofold performance of No. 32. Upon this hushed and expectant mood bursts the second subject, designed in a bold succession of minims as the greatest possible contrast to the rushing stream of quavers:

Ex. 36.

The purpose of this subject is obvious. It is to provide a strong *canto fermo* to bind together the rather too flexible quavers. In a few bars' time this is made evident:

Ex. 37.

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A curious change now comes over this subject (No. 36). It would seem that while singing in his mind the melody of the first four notes, Schubert's memory consciously or unconsciously recalled a famous phrase from *The Erl-King*:

Ex. 38.

and the two following bars (a major version of the above) at the words 'Meine Töchter führen den nächtlichen Reihn'. Or it may have been that he deliberately recalled the phrase to cast over this stormy movement the shadow of the hand of Death. In any case, the following passage is very remarkable:

Ex. 39.

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This passage, twenty-eight bars long, ends with a succession of syncopated chords, which from now onwards are a noticeable feature of this movement:

Ex. 40.

No. 39, *a*, is reintroduced, now in F major, with the melody, formerly given to the second violin, handed over to the first violin, when its similarity to *The Erl-King* is made more apparent.

Ex. 41.

The emphatic and syncopated harmony of No. 40 is given thrice, the third presentation ending in A minor, which may be said to be the close of the second subject section and the commencement of the development, though Schubert's Muse is so free and untrammelled that it is difficult to follow all her wayward steps. The section upon which we are entering differs greatly from all that has gone before. Here all is light, airy, fanciful—an opening in dark wintry forest, where elves and fairies play under a clear and tranquil sky. The three lower strings set up a thrumming accompaniment, formed from the motif (No. 31, *b*). Over this the first violin flits gently, poises on one toe, and vanishes into thin air:

Ex. 42.

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No analysis or quotation can do justice to the lightness and delicacy of fancy exhibited in the composition of the closing bars of this section. It is possible to state that the materials used are the two motifs of the opening subject (No. 31); nothing, however, but a perfect performance could reveal the marvel of their use.

In the recapitulation there are several new features. The repetitions are omitted, and, instead of the bridge-passage (No. 35), Schubert devises an entirely new section containing some arresting modulations, of which the following is a skeleton harmony:

Ex. 43.

Throughout this passage (and the similar modulation which occurs a few bars later from the key of D major into B flat minor) the unflagging rhythm of quavers is maintained, first in one part, then in another.

Having reached the key of B flat minor, Schubert settles down on a low F to prepare for the return of the second subject in B flat major. In this passage Schubert indulges in some rhythmic variations, which have since been associated with the name of Brahms; that is, by stressing certain chords he changes the rhythm of two-in-a-bar into that of three-in-a-bar:

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Ex. 44.

Throughout this climax, and the *diminuendo* therefrom, the figure (No. 44, *a*) runs persistently in the bass (with or without a G flat) until at the end of the *diminuendo* it passes into the upper strings and is left to the care of the first violin, a single wavering line. A pause: and then the second subject re-enters *fortissimo* in the key of B flat major. The second subject, with its attendant themes, follows very much the same course as it did on its first appearance, the only alteration being the necessary alteration in the keys. The section is concluded with a variant of the elfish passage (No. 42), which leads naturally and easily into the *coda*.

Before giving us the real *coda* Schubert runs through the first-subject section once just to remind us of his text. The real *coda*, marked *prestissimo*, opens with a subdued murmur of quavers which, with a sudden *crescendo*, burst into harmony, as in No. 35. To analyse the harmonic and rhythmic features of this *coda* is unnecessary, because, like other pyrotechnic displays, before we can recover from our delighted amazement, it is done.

In listening to this quartet it is impossible to rid oneself of the question—if Schubert had lived, and had published this quartet after preliminary performances from manuscript, would it stand in every detail exactly in its present form? There are undoubtedly one or two passages which sound as though his un-

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canny spontaneity had momentarily failed, leaving some architectural details rather insecure, some quaint rhythms rather unbalanced, and some harmonies rather too elliptical and obscure. On the other hand, his spontaneity has given us many lovely effects of colour, harmony, and dynamic energy which no laboured meditation could produce. If, perhaps, we set his virtues against his faults, we may find, like Robinson Crusoe, that there is a profitable margin on the side of his virtues.

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Octet, Op. 166

The octet for clarinet, horn, bassoon, two violins, viola, cello, and double-bass was written during February and finished on March the first, in the year 1824. It was composed for Count F. von Troyer, chief officer of the household to the Archduke Rudolf, the friend of Beethoven, whom Beethoven honoured with the dedication of the piano Sonata (Op. 81) and the violin Sonata (Op. 96).

The octet is closely modelled upon the septet of Beethoven (Op. 20). Each movement of Beethoven's masterpiece has a counterpart in that of Schubert. But while it is recognized that the octet is a great compliment to Beethoven, it must also be recognized that it is a great triumph for Schubert; for to have copied the master so faithfully and yet to have preserved his own individuality so fully, was a fine, if not a unique, achievement.

It is a work of very great length consisting of the following movements:

1. Introduction (Adagio) and Allegro.
2. Andante un poco mosso.
3. Scherzo and Trio.
4. Andante (seven variations).
5. Minuetto and Trio.
6. Introduction (Andante molto) and Allegro.

First Movement: *Adagio and Allegro: Sonata form.*

The introduction (*Adagio*) opens with a bold delivery of the key-note by all the instruments. This note the wind instruments and the contra-bass sustain softly, while the string quartet, having given the

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movement a good confident start, move under and above them in the following distinguished phrases :

Ex. 1.

In the sixth bar the rhythm is first introduced as a definite anticipation of the opening subject of the subsequent *Allegro*. This rhythmic phrase is delivered three times by the first violin in the key of F major :

Ex. 2.

followed by a threefold delivery in the key of A flat major by the second violin. Moving in this rhythm the music passes into D flat major, and thence in a big *crescendo* to B flat minor. At this point, over a soft note sustained by the horn, the clarinet takes up the rhythm of No. 2, but at twice the pace, thus hinting vaguely at the opening phrase of the subsequent second subject.

The *Allegro* (the first movement proper) begins with a unison statement of the virile first subject, an arpeggio of the chord of F major, of which the harmony notes are momentarily displaced by the semitones which immediately precede them.

Ex. 3.

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The sudden burst into harmony on the second beat of the third bar sets the seal of triumphant accomplishment upon the strenuous upward climb of the two unison bars. The second portion of the principal subject preserves the rhythm of the opening bars, but in a falling melody, which suggests that Schubert knew and loved the 'Water-Carrier' overture of Cherubini, which was produced in Vienna in the year 1804.

Ex. 4.

The appearance of triplets in the third bar (No. 4, *a*) forms a welcome relief to the rather incessant rhythm .

In the twentieth bar the principal theme returns and modulates into D minor, in which key (after a short *diminuendo*) the second subject enters. This subject is very characteristic of Schubert. In the first place, it is evident from the rhythm, which is the same as that of the opening subject, that this tune sprang spontaneously out of the preceding matter. In the second place, it depends, as do many other melodies of Schubert (compare the Trio of the C major Symphony), upon the use of a remarkable chord at the most significant moment in the progress of the melody. In this instance, as in the Trio of the C major Symphony, the remarkable chord is a dominant thirteenth. In the third place, it is touched by that peculiar charm of Schubert which enabled him to write the most natural and even obvious tunes without descending to the vulgar and the commonplace.

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Notice how the rhythm and the monotonous tonic harmony of bars 1 and 2 contribute to the glorious richness of the dominant thirteenth (No. 5, *a*). This theme is repeated and extended to six bars, coming to an end in the key of C major. The purpose of this modulation into C major is to prepare for the appearance of the second subject in F major. Actually by the laws of sonata form the second subject should have been in C major in the exposition and in the tonic major, F major, in the recapitulation, but Schubert reverses that procedure and presents the second subject in the key of F major now and in B flat subsequently.

The second subject in its formal dress is as follows :

At the conclusion of this melody (ten bars) there is a short but brilliant development of the rhythm of No. 5, interspersed with flashing scale passages in

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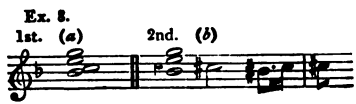
the strings. At the close of this section (nineteen bars) the clarinet reintroduces the final bars of the second subject :

Ex. 7.

Schubert's imagination, being suddenly fired by the rhythm of the closing bar (No. 7, *a*), leads him to write a new episode founded entirely upon this rhythm, wherein the cello and the clarinet indulge in an intimate dialogue, while the violin supplies a running accompaniment of ubiquitous semiquavers. The exposition ends with a lengthy development of the rhythm of the second subject (No. 5).

The opening of the development section is most romantic. The exposition ends on a long-sustained chord (No. 8, *a*) :

Ex. 8.



which, as dominant seventh of F major, serves as an obvious means of transition back to the beginning for the formal repeat; but on the second time (No. 8, *b*) the clarinet, working in the rhythm of the principal subject, takes not C but C sharp, thereby turning the current of the music into F sharp minor. How dearly Schubert loved his second subject can be seen from the fact that he devotes the whole of the development section to the display of its beauties, and how carefully he arranged that those beauties should be dis-

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played to their greatest advantage! In the seventh bar of the development he brings all the instruments to a full close in F sharp minor, all except the second violin, which continues an unobtrusive arpeggio of that harmony. Schubert evidently determined that no instrumental fuss should obscure the entry of the first violin, destined to give to the melody (No. 5) all that personal intensity of passion that a violin alone can give. Now it appears clear why he always gave the melody previously to other instruments, such as the clarinet and horn—he wished to reserve to this moment the full passion and unearthly loveliness of this melody. Notice, too, how thoughtfully the pathetic and lovely chord of the dominant minor thirteenth (what cumbersome means of expression these theorists have!) is arranged:

Ex. 9.

No detail of placement or colour has been neglected. The important seventh (B) is given to the bassoon, to gain greater sonority. To the rich-toned viola is given the next most important note, E sharp. And observe how the whole region of the melody itself has been preserved from the inroads or excursions of other instruments.

But the magic of Schubert's genius does not end here. Just as the violin is falling to rest, the clarinet interposes a modest 'May I add a word or two?' and then proceeds to deduce from the closing bar of the violin's sentence the most incredibly beautiful cadence:

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Ex. 10.

The harmony at (*a*) must have startled and entranced the good Count von Troyer when, as he played the passage at the first performance, he heard the accompanying strings support his F sharp with that strange but not extravagant chord of C major. And what did Schuppanzigh, he who knew Beethoven and all his works, what did he think of such daring yet lovely music written by this shy and unhonoured young man?

The cello now takes up the wondrous story, the violin replying as did the clarinet previously. Again the most exquisite attention has been paid to the details of the music, but we must not linger on them now, or we shall never be done. This presentation of the theme ends in E minor, when a vigorous *tutti* breaks in upon this romantic mood and carries the music into a powerful cadence in F sharp major (the dominant of B minor). Here the craftsman in Schubert takes control of Schubert the extemporizer. 'Too much of the same rhythm,' says the budding craftsman. 'I can't help it,' replies the extemporizer; 'it's got right into my system and I can't control it.' 'But you must,' says the craftsman. 'How?' inquires the extemporizer. 'Very easily,' replies the craftsman, 'by writing a counterpoint in an entirely new slow-moving rhythm, so as to give the listener some relief from the incessant pulsation of all that has gone before.' So at this point Schubert, while maintaining

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the rhythm of the second subject in the strings, introduces a new melody in the clarinet which, though not very significant, does provide some slight variety.

Ex. 11.

At (*a*) and (*b*) the second violin has some boldly conflicting suspensions which give a feeling of great strength to the passage. Another *tutti* passage, exactly similar to that which occurred seven bars before (No. 11), again breaks in upon this more tranquil mood, and bears the music to a close upon a chord of E major, the dominant of A minor. Here No. 11 appears, the second violin taking the part of the clarinet, the viola taking the bold contrapuntal line previously sustained by the second violin. At the conclusion of this passage Schubert repeats the introduction, not exactly in its original form, but in a manner that fits most happily into the existing structure of the movement. So skilfully is it done that the arrival of the introduction passes at first unnoticed. No time alteration is made, but notes of double the length are now used in order to preserve the original *tempo*. Another curious thing about this interpolation is that the order of the phrases is reversed, i.e. what was originally bar 6 now changes place with bar 1, and vice versa. Thus it happens that the opening theme (No. 1) now concludes this version of the introduction and leads straight away into the recapitulation.

The recapitulation follows the normal course, reproducing the main features of the exposition with but slight alterations. The repetition of the principal theme, which in the exposition occurred in the key

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of the tonic major, is now given in B flat major, and the original modulation to D minor now becomes, by this change, a modulation to G minor. In this key the second subject appears, first in the bassoon and afterwards in the viola. The formal presentation of the subject, however, occurs in the key of B flat, and, this being its positively last appearance, it is presented through the medium of the first violin. From this point until the *coda* is reached there are no striking alterations.

The *coda* is a short but vigorous affair, and opens with a further version of the principal subject (No. 3). In spite of occasional modulations the music stays firmly in the key of F major, working persistently in the rhythm of the principal subject, until after an apparent close the music sinks to a *pianissimo*; the strings supply a ghostly echo of the dominating rhythm, and over this shadowy background the horn faintly begins the second subject, as if recalling it from a delightful but dimly recollected dream; the fading impression grows stronger; slowly and lovingly he recalls it back into the living world; again it fades and dies away. The movement ends.

Second Movement: *Andante un poco mosso.*

To all lovers of Schubert this movement has an unmistakable Schubertian appearance—recalling in all externals the famous song 'Ave Maria'. Actually the song was composed a year later than the octet, but no doubt Schubert discovered that the style of accompaniment and harmony which suited this melody so well, would equally well suit the new melody which was developing in his mind. Hence their exact similarity. The curious thing about these two typically Schubertian melodies is, however, not their similarity, but the

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fact that being so similar in feature they should be so independent of each other in character.

The movement is in French overture form, that is, the composer 'having produced all his material in the first half of the piece, repeats the whole unchanged except that such portions as were in the dominant are, in the repetition, given in the tonic'. The structure of the opening melody is unusual, being cast in the poetic form known as a Roundel (a form much loved by Swinburne), in which the verse opens and closes with the same phrase. The following verse from Swinburne's roundel, 'On a baby's death', will display the form :

The little eyes that never knew
Light other than the dawning skies,
What new life now lights up anew
The little eyes.

Consciously or unconsciously Schubert shaped his melody into this poetic form :

Ex. 12.

In spite of the charm of this melody, it must be confessed that Schubert has not quite mastered the unusual form.

He seems unable to decide definitely whether to

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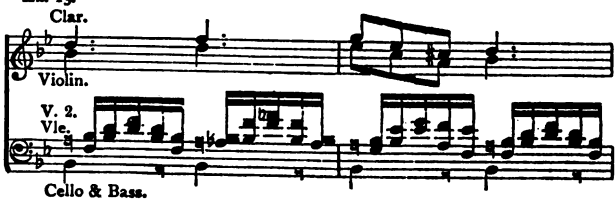
regard the last phrase (*a*) as the closing bars of the first melody or the opening bars of the new, just as Alice-in-Wonderland was uncertain whether to regard the ornamental cincture round the middle of Humpty-Dumpty as a neck-tie or a waist-belt. But even if Schubert's meaning was clear to himself (and we may take it for granted that it was), he has failed to make it clear to the listener owing to his too frequent use of the tonic harmony. Perfect cadences are to music what full stops are to language, imperfect or interrupted cadences fulfilling the rôle of commas or colons. When, therefore, after the tenth bar of the melody (No. 12) Schubert closes the clarinet phrase with a perfect cadence, the listener assumes that the melody has indeed come to an end, and is naturally somewhat surprised to find the opening phrase (*a*) rather artificially tacked on. Like Mr. Jingle, one doesn't presume to dictate; but if Schubert had reserved his perfect cadence until the close, the whole musical stanza would have been as easy to understand at a first hearing as a correctly punctuated verse.

The whole of this melody is given to the clarinet, the accompaniment being supplied by the second violin, viola, cello, and contra-bass. The melody is then repeated by the first violin, the clarinet continuing in a new melodic line above it.

Ex. 13.



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By way of a bridge-passage to the second subject, Schubert begins an interesting development of the opening phrase (No. 12, *a*), which becomes the bass of a rhythmic figure (No. 14, *a*), of which much use is subsequently made.

Ex. 14.

Five bars later this figure (No. 14, *a*) is transferred to the second violin, while the first violin weaves a new melody out of the figure (No. 14, *b*). After a modulation to D flat major these parts are again shuffled: the clarinet and bassoon taking the figure (No. 14, *a*) in octaves; the first and second violins taking the figure (No. 14, *b*) also in octaves; the cello and double-bass as before supplying the foundation (No. 14, *c*). The second subject appears shortly afterwards in the key of F major.

Ex. 15.

The opening phrase is given twice, first by the clarinet and then by the first violin. A great deal of the charm of this melody is due to the subsidiary melody which is given to the bassoon and cello. At the repetition of this melody the two phrases (No. 15, *a*) are shared by the bassoon and the horn, the other instruments throwing little wisps of melody in the way, like children strewing flowers in the path of the bride and bridegroom.

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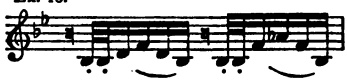
Eighteen bars of no particular interest lead back to the recapitulation. But though seemingly of no particular interest, these bars are not without a purpose. Like dramatic scenes without any striking incident in a play of Shakespeare, they serve to relax the mind from the emotional strain of what has gone before and what is about to happen.

When the recapitulation comes, a new rhythm is introduced into the accompaniment:

Ex. 16.



The melody (No. 12) is given to the first violin, the horn supplying an interior melody, which to the horn-players of that day must have seemed strangely flexible and unhorn-like. The violin melody pursues its ordinary course until the ninth bar, at which point Schubert, feeling no doubt that the constant return to the tonic was overdone in the exposition, breaks the normal progress of the tune and lashes the music to a climax on the dominant of E flat, whence the clarinet emerges with a *pianissimo* cadence in the key of E flat minor. The melody (No. 12) is now given to the cello, the rhythmic accompaniment (No. 16) being supplied by the violins. Over the top of this the clarinet indulges in a fanciful edition of the melody originally supplied by the horn as a counterpoint to the first violin. This presentation of the melody also ends with a dramatic modulation:

Ex. 17.

(Outline only.)

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which should be noticed carefully, as Schubert, seeing the rhythmic possibilities of the figure (No. 17, *a*), builds the next eight bars upon it. These eight bars lead us from A flat minor into D minor, and then the cello and double-bass reintroduce the opening phrase of No. 12, the bassoon supplying the counter-melody (No. 14, *a*). Working with these materials, the music reaches the key of B flat major, when the second subject in three-part harmony is reintroduced by the wind instruments. In the repetition of the subject all the instruments are employed in a grand widely-spread harmony. The *coda*, which soon follows, opens with a phrase (No. 12, *a*) played first by the violin, then by the second violin, and finally by the viola. Working to a climax, these instruments, aided by the cello and double-bass, sink down to a soft chord (the dominant seventh of B flat major) and the end seems near, when the unaccountable Schubert introduces one of those amazingly unexpected afterthoughts. This afterthought is introduced thus :

Ex. 18.

The dissonance of the D natural (No. 18, *a*) especially pleases Schubert as he repeats it in the following three bars. Actually its explanation is simple, i.e. in the four chords (No. 18, *a*, and onwards) E flat is a common factor and the D natural merely a lengthened appoggiatura. But if the explanation is simple, the result is alarming.

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In the last seven bars the cello comes into prominence with an extended version of the opening phrase (No. 12, *a*), after which the movement ends.

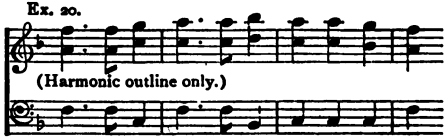
Third Movement. *Scherzo: Minuet and Trio form.*

This Scherzo, like the Trio of Schubert's C major Symphony and the *Andante* of Beethoven's A major Symphony, lives and moves in one characteristic rhythm. From beginning to end the rhythm ♩· ♪♩ | ♩ is never absent for more than two bars at a time. The Scherzo opens with this unison theme in the strings:

Ex. 19.

followed by a harmonized version for all the instruments.

Ex. 20.



After the usual Schubertian repetition of these eight bars the music goes romping off first into four repeated bars in the dominant of C major, then four bars in the dominant of F major, then it goes bumping about through harmonies which suggest A minor or D minor, but, like a cat, it always seems to fall on its feet at the last moment, the feet in this instance being the chord of C major. This section, thirty-six bars, is marked for repetition.

After this repetition the strings attack the rhythm boldly, in the key of B flat, but soon leap into D flat major,

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where a new theme, spontaneous but undistinguished, appears, first in the clarinet and then in the first violin. A curiously bold harmonic passage now occurs :

Ex. 21.

After eight bars this passage moves up into B minor, and then after an eight-bar *crescendo* the first subject returns in the tonic major. From this point to the end of the Scherzo the music follows roughly the course of the opening bars, being full alternately of boisterous vigour and elfish delicacy.

The Trio is a complete contrast to the Scherzo, being entirely free from violent rhythms and violent tone-contrasts. Indeed, the rhythm is uniformly smooth and the tone no less uniformly subdued.

The opening theme (twenty bars) begins as follows :

Ex. 22.
String Quartet.

and ends in the key of G major.

The next section continues over a similar moving bass with a series of phrases of a slightly different rhythm :

Ex. 23.
Clar.

This section (forty bars) ends with a reference to the

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first theme (No. 22), and, after its due repetition, is followed by the Scherzo.

Third Movement: *Theme and Seven Variations.*

The theme is one of those tunes which seemed to come so easily to Schubert, and is full of childlike grace and innocent mischief. It is said that Sullivan was a great admirer of Schubert, and it is not difficult to perceive that in his Policeman's song from *The Pirates of Penzance* he carried his admiration for this tune into the regions of sincerest flattery. The theme is a regular thirty-two bar melody, of which the opening phrase is given to the first violin.

Ex. 24.

Andante.

The repetition of this melody (eight bars) is given to the clarinet, which then sustains the rest of the theme. To mention the details of each variation would be impossible. All that can be done is to point out their characteristic features.

Variation I. The theme is now given in an ornamental triplet version, in which all the instruments, except the sedentary horn, indulge their love of motion.

Variation II. The strings maintain the triplets in arpeggios while the wood-wind supply a firm core of harmony in a sharply defined rhythm .

Variation III. The strings now supply an harmonic background of flickering semiquavers, under which the horn opens a dialogue with the clarinet and bassoon. The horn has some fine melodic phrases to utter, and doubtless the horn-player thought, as he struggled through his part, 'We never saw it on this fashion'.

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Variation IV. The hero of this variation is the cello, with many opportunities, both in rhythmic variety and wide compass, to show his skill.

Variation V. In C minor. The second violin and viola, having been hitherto kept in the position of those who stand and wait, are now given the privilege of playing a variation, rhythmically a cousin of the second variation of the 'Kreutzer' Sonata.

Ex. 25.

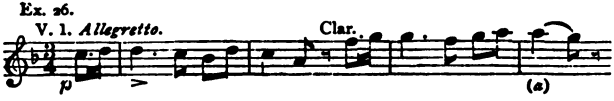
Variation VI. In A flat major. The theme is presented through a series of ever-changing colour-tints. Just as some fascinating fireworks change colour imperceptibly while we watch them, so these melodic phrases change and interchange with a deliciously bewildering effect.

Variation VII. 'If it is fireworks you want,' says the first violin, 'allow me'; whereupon he flashes out into a musical Catherine-wheel of gyrating demisemiquavers. The *coda* which follows is built upon the opening phrase of the theme (No. 24), while a continual throbbing of demisemiquavers is maintained by way of accompaniment.

Fourth Movement: *Minuetto and Trio.*

After the heights of brilliance reached in the variations, we descend in this Minuet to the plain. All is tranquil, simple, and, to the players, a relief from the technical terrors they have just outlived.

Ex. 26.



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A tender, feminine charm is given to the movement by a frequent use of the falling cadence (No. 26, *a*). Compare the Minuet and Trio in the same key of Beethoven's Eighth Symphony. The first theme (twelve bars) is repeated. In the next section triplets (hinted at previously by the clarinet) give variety to the rhythm, which otherwise would have been obsessed by the opening rhythm .

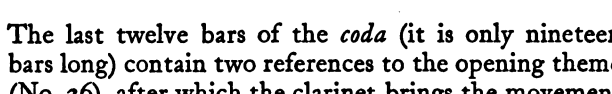
For twenty-one bars the music moves in these varied rhythms through the keys of A flat major, D flat minor, finally re-emerging in F major. Here the opening theme returns in a greatly extended form. The Trio which follows is but another aspect of the Minuet.

Ex. 27.

V. 1 & Bassoon in octaves.

The whole Trio, a pleasant little movement of forty-eight bars, is built upon the rhythm of this opening phrase, except for the slight variety obtained by the inclusion of two semiquaver scales. After the repetition of the Minuet there is a *coda*, which opens with the following phrase taken from the second section of the Minuet:

Ex. 28.



Horn.

The last twelve bars of the *coda* (it is only nineteen bars long) contain two references to the opening theme (No. 26), after which the clarinet brings the movement to an end in a carefully graduated *rallentando*.

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Fifth Movement: *Introduction* (*Andante molto*) *and Allegro: Sonata form.*

The introduction is very short, but even within its brief seventeen bars Schubert manages to give us a fine piece of dramatic music, Brahms-like in its sombre dignity and grandeur. It opens over a *quasi* drum-roll, nominally in F minor, actually, however, in D flat major.

Ex. 28a.

This is repeated with increased power in a tonality suggesting B flat minor, though actually in G flat major. The gloomy splendour of this tonality is accentuated by the B naturals of the preceding bar:

Ex. 29.

The last seven bars are of no particular interest, their purpose being to create a feeling of expectation about what is in store for us.

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The *Allegro* opens with the following curiously balanced melody:

Ex. 30.

The eight bars which conclude this sixteen-bar melody are more straight-forward and end with the following easily remembered cadence:

Ex. 31.

The whole melody (Nos. 30 and 31) is built upon a fine bass of moving crotchets, and is played in an almost unrelieved *piano* tone by the string quartet. Immediately after the cadence (No. 31) the melody is delivered *forte* by all the instruments. To the end of this melody a short *coda* (eight bars) is attached, after which there is a bridge-passage founded upon the following five-bar theme:

Ex. 32.

This is repeated with shakes, and lengthened to ten bars. At this point the lower strings and the upper strings embark on a brilliant imitative passage which comes to an end on the dominant of C major. Schubert

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now indulges in a two bars' silence, a favourite device of his; compare the Finale of the C major Symphony, the first movement of the B minor Symphony, and the first movement of the B flat Trio. Having thus excited our curiosity, he introduces his second subject in the key of C major. The viola supplies a throbbing dominant pedal over which the wind instruments announce the first four bars of the melody:

This is repeated by the upper strings. The second half of the melody, sixteen bars in all, ends with the following cadence (*a*), to which is added a *coda* (*b*):

The melody is not repeated, but Schubert begins straightway a vigorous development of the figure (No. 33, *a*) which, by its rhythm and characteristic shake, reveals its close connexion with the first subject (No. 30, *a*). Throughout the next twenty-one bars the shake and rhythm appear in one part or another, sometimes in the outline of No. 30, *a*, sometimes in the outline of No. 33, *a*. These twenty-one bars end in

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the key of D minor. Here a new figure of curious rhythm is introduced :

This figure and the figure which grows out of it :

play an important part both here and in the similar place in the recapitulation.

Although this passage, twenty-eight bars, from No. 35 onwards is occupied with a development of the opening melody (No. 30), it cannot be ranked as in the development section, as all the material here developed is reproduced, with but the formal change of key, in the recapitulation. In the bar immediately following No. 35 the bassoon and clarinet begin a passage in imitation, accompanied by the figure (No. 36) which proves to be in double-counterpoint, that is, it serves equally well whether above or below its *canto fermo*. This passage (thirteen bars) ends in D minor, whereupon Schubert repeats it with slight alterations, viz. the figure (No. 35) is given twice, while the imitation between the clarinet and bassoon is reversed, the clarinet leading and the bassoon replying. This passage ends in C major. At this point the formal development section begins. The first thirty-eight bars are devoted to the development of the first subject (No. 30), that is to say, to the first two bars of the subject. The development opens with an imitative dialogue between the clarinet and bassoon over a

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pizzicato bass (double-bass), while the second violin contributes an incessant flow of quavers founded on the passage (No. 36). The viola adds to the richness of the polyphony with a swiftly reiterated interior dominant pedal:

Ex. 37.

Four bars later the bassoon takes the place of the cello, and three bars later the viola replaces the bassoon.

Still continuing with an imitative treatment of these two bars, Schubert now contrasts the combined strength of the clarinet and bassoon in octaves against the high notes of the first violin. These imitative phrases draw closer together to increase the excitement of a growing climax, while the viola reinforces the second violin in a vigorous performance of the quaver phrase (No. 36). Carried along by the impetus of these energetic quavers, the music rises to a climax in C sharp minor, and thence by another quick *crescendo* to an abrupt end on the dominant of A major. The development of the first subject is done with and Schubert closes that task with a gesture of pleasure, as children shut a lesson-book with a resounding and vindictive bang. As in the exposition, the second subject can only be approached in silence. So, after two bars' silence, the viola begins a reiterated dominant pedal, around which the second violin and cello eddy and shake under the happy influence of the second

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subject (No. 33). This is taken up by the first and second violin, but before the tune is finished the cello and bass (poor things, they are always confusing the first and second subjects!) break into the first subject. The wind instruments tactfully point out that the subject under discussion is No. 33. The cello and bass agree, but make exactly the same mistake again, for which the cello immediately apologizes. However, as all the instruments feel that the first subject is the nicer of the two, they turn their attention to the preparation of a right worthy performance of it. For eighteen bars over a low C (dominant pedal of F major) the cello works in the rhythm of the opening phrase of the first subject (No. 30), while the other instruments supply the following harmonies:

Ex. 38.

(Outline only.)

The music works up through these eighteen bars to a climax, when the first subject (No. 30) returns with the utmost splendour. The recapitulation has no new features until the end, when, after a short *crescendo* indicating a full close in B flat major, the music bursts with surprising suddenness into the key of G flat major. Then there passes with splendid pomp and pageantry the solemn harmony from the introduction. All the resources of the instruments are employed to intensify the power and brilliance of this stately and grand procession; the second violin by means of double-stopping is enabled to do not only its

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own work but that of the first violin, which, being freed from the burden of sustaining the outline, is able to execute a brilliant yet expressive arpeggio through the harmonies held by the other instruments.

After this dramatic interlude, the *Allegro*, now raised to *Allegro molto*, returns to wind up the movement with an exhilarating *coda*. Beginning *piano* with an imitative treatment of the opening phrase of the first subject (No. 30), the music soon moves in a *crescendo* up to a series of *sforzandos* over which quavers begin to take the place of crotchets. These quavers, modelled upon the figure (No. 36), are given to all the strings, which rush headlong through a quick succession of harmonies until, with a final spurt (*accelerando*), they reach the tonic major, when with much tonic and dominant rejoicing the movement ends.

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